

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A device for collecting ratings on a plurality of subjects, said device comprising:
 - a processor;
 - a memory connected to said processor;
 - an input device connected to said processor;
 - an output device connected to said processor; and
 - a short-range transceiver connected to said processor, wherein said processor, said memory, said input device, said output device, and said transceiver ~~[[being]]~~ are contained within a case configured for portability; said processor being configured for:
 - receiving, from said input device, a first set of ratings for ones of a plurality of subjects,
 - storing a policy specifying whether rating information is to be accepted through said short-range transceiver,
 - responsive to said policy being met, receiving, through said short-range transceiver, a second set of ratings for ones of said plurality of subjects, ~~[[and]]~~
 - updating ones of said first set of ratings by merging with corresponding ones of said second set of ratings, and
 - displaying said updated ones of said first set of ratings.
2. (Currently amended) The device of Claim 1, wherein said short-range transceiver uses one of Bluetooth technology and WiFi technology.
3. (Canceled)
4. (Currently amended) The device of Claim 1, wherein said processor is further configured for receiving, from said input device, a first set of indications of interest regarding additional ones of said plurality of subjects, whereby receipt of ratings through said short-range transceiver is triggered for said additional ones of said plurality of subjects by said first set of indications of interest.

5. (Currently amended) The device of Claim 1, wherein said processor is further configured for updating ones of said first set of ratings by calculating, for each [[item]] of said ones of said first set of ratings updated, a new weighted rating based on an existing weighted rating from said first set of ratings, an existing weighted rating from said second set of ratings, and a similarity factor between said first set of ratings and said second set of ratings.
6. (Currently amended) The device of Claim 1, wherein said processor is further configured for updating ones of said first set of ratings by calculating, for each [[item]] of said ones of said first set of ratings updated, a new weighted rating based on an existing weighted rating from said first set of ratings, an existing individual rating from said second set of ratings, and a similarity factor between said first set of ratings and said second set of ratings.
7. (Currently amended) The device of Claim 1, wherein said processor is further configured for updating ones of said first set of ratings by merging, for each of said ones of said first set of ratings [[item]], a second semantic tree from said second set of ratings into a first semantic tree from said first set of ratings, then calculating a new weighted rating based on said first semantic tree.
8. (Previously presented) The device of Claim 1, wherein said processor is further configured for adding comments from said second set of ratings into said first set of ratings.
9. (Original) The device of Claim 1, wherein said device is from the group consisting of a personal digital assistant, a laptop computer, and a cellular phone.
10. (Currently amended) A method of collecting ratings on a plurality of subjects, said method comprising the steps of:
- storing, on a portable computing device, a first set of ratings for ones of a plurality of subjects and a first set of indications of interest regarding additional ones of said plurality of subjects;
 - storing on the portable computing device, a policy specifying whether rating information is to be accepted through a short-range transmission device;
 - encountering, through [[a]] the short-range transmission device, a user having a second set of ratings for ones of said plurality of subjects;
 - responsive to said policy being met, receiving, through said short-range transmission device, ones of said second set of ratings; [[and]]

updating ones of said first set of ratings and ones of said first set of indications of interest by merging with corresponding ones of said second set of ratings; and
displaying said updated ones of said first set of ratings.

11. (Canceled)

12. (Original) The method of Claim 10, wherein said merging step is performed dependent on said second set of ratings having a similarity of at least a given level to said first set of ratings.

13. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 10, further comprising the [[step]] steps of broadcasting a request for ratings and responding to a broadcast of a request for ratings.

14. (Canceled)

15. (Original) The method of Claim 10, wherein said merging step comprises receiving a plurality of individual responses for each of ones of said plurality of subjects and storing said plurality of individual responses in a semantic tree network for said subject.

16. (Original) The method of Claim 15, wherein a rating for one of said plurality of subjects is calculated by summing all collected responses in a semantic tree network for said one of said plurality of subjects.

17. (Original) The method of Claim 10, wherein said merging step comprises calculating a rating by summing a first rating of said first set of ratings and a corresponding second rating of said second set of ratings, using a weighting factor.

18. (Canceled)

19. (Currently amended) A computer program product stored on a computer readable medium, said computer program product comprising:

first instructions for storing, on a portable computing device, a first set of ratings for ones of a plurality of subjects and a first set of indications of interest regarding additional ones of said plurality of subjects;

second instructions for recognizing, through a short-range transmission/reception device, a user having a second set of ratings for ones of said plurality of subjects;

third instructions for storing on the portable computing device a policy specifying whether rating information is to be accepted through said short-range transmission/reception device;

[[third]] fourth instructions, responsive to said policy being met, for receiving, through said short-range ~~transmission~~ transmission/reception device, ones of said second set of ratings; [[and]]

~~fourth~~ fifth instructions for updating ones of said first set of ratings and ones of said first set of indications of interest by merging with corresponding ones of said second set of ratings; and
sixth instructions for displaying said updated ones of said first set of ratings.

20. (Canceled)

21. (Currently amended) The computer program product of Claim 19, wherein said fifth ~~fourth~~ instructions are performed dependent on said second set of ratings having a similarity of at least a given level to said first set of ratings.

22. (Currently amended) The computer program product of Claim 19, further comprising [[fifth]] seventh instructions for broadcasting a request for ratings, and eighth instructions for responding to a broadcast of a request for ratings.

23. (Canceled)

24. (Currently amended) The computer program product of Claim 19, wherein said ~~fourth~~ fifth instructions comprise receiving a plurality of individual responses for each of ones of said plurality of subjects and storing said plurality of individual responses in a semantic tree network for said subject.

25. (Original) The computer program product of Claim 24, wherein a rating for one of said plurality of subjects is calculated by summing all collected responses in a semantic tree network for said one of said plurality of subjects.

26. (Currently amended) The computer program product of Claim 19, wherein said ~~fourth~~ fifth instructions comprise calculating a rating by summing a first rating of said first set of ratings and a corresponding second rating of said second set of ratings, using a weighting factor.

27. (New) The device of Claim 1, wherein said policy comprises at least one of a policy to not accept input from a user that has provided input within a last period of time and a policy to receive input only during certain hours.
28. (New) The device of Claim 1, wherein said policy is entered by a user.
29. (New) The method of Claim 10, wherein said policy comprises at least one of a policy to not accept input from a user that has provided input within a last period of time and a policy to receive input only during certain hours.
30. (New) The method of Claim 10, wherein said policy is entered by a user.
31. (New) The computer program product of Claim 19, wherein said policy comprises at least one of a policy to not accept input from a user that has provided input within a last period of time and a policy to receive input only during certain hours.
32. (New) The computer program product of Claim 19, wherein said policy is entered by a user.